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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DANILOVICH'S VISIT TO MALI: MCC SCORECARD,  
COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES

STATE 152489

¶1. Summary: During his recent visit to Mali, MCC CEO Ambassador Danilovich discussed the MCC's Scorecard with Malian Prime Minister Modibo Sidibe November 14. MCC officials held a series of follow-on meetings with Malians to develop plans to address issues raised by the scorecard. Danilovich also delivered an address to the Community of Democracies Ministerial elaborating on the links between development, democracy and good governance, and gave several interviews to the Malian Press. Press coverage of the visit was uniformly positive. End Summary.

¶2. In an October 30 letter, Ambassador McCulley conveyed to Malian Prime Minister Sidibe the content of Mali's MCC eligibility scorecard, noting that Mali does not meet the eligibility criteria for FY08 due in large part to the introduction of anew indicator and data collection issues under MC's "Investing in People" category. On November14, MCC CEO Ambassador Danilovich, accompanied byMCC Director Jim Mazzarella and Country Director Jn Anderson, met with Pime Minister Sidibe to discuss the Scorecard and ompact implementation issues. The Prime Minister as accompanied by his Directeur de Cabinet Djang Sissoko and Economic Advisor Madani Toure, as well as MCA Director Bania Toure.

¶3. The Prime Minister underscored the seriousness Mali put on the news of the eligibility failings by elaborating on GOM plans to address each of the failed indicators. He said that the compact and the criteria were in line with the development goals of the President's second mandate, and thus touched on general policy areas that already were of concern. He mentioned the President's Investment Council which has been working on the business climate in Mali, the new Agricultural Orientation Law that addresses certain land access and rights issues, and other government initiatives. The potential impact of failing the eligibility criteria on the present and any potential second Compact was discussed, as well as a general approach to a remediation plan. The PM said that he would create an inter-ministerial committee to address the criteria, but provided little detail. A series of subsequent bilateral meetings between MCC and senior officials in the responsible ministries indicated that the Malians were well-engaged in addressing the problems.

¶4. The Prime Minister was also concerned about how the Compact could achieve its objectives in the face of the loss in value of the U.S. dollar and the rising cost of fuel (among other factors). MCC stated there was no definitive answer but it was a problem for MCC in general and solutions were being explored. It was evident from the discussion that the Compact is of such importance to the President's and the government's program that any compromise on the program's objectives would negatively affect the Government's (and MCC's) credibility.

¶5. In addition to bilateral discussions with Malian officials, Ambassador Danilovich was asked to give remarks at the opening of the Fourth Community of Democracies Ministerial hosted in Bamako from November 15-17. The address focused on the link between development, democracy, and good governance.

¶6. Thanks to an excellent pre-existing relationship with members of the Malian media that make up an "MCC Press Corps," Ambassador Danilovich's visit to Mali received extremely wide and positive press coverage in both the print and electronic media. His visit to Segou, tour of the airport and the industrial park site in Bamako, and press conference resulted in 15 minutes of prime time television coverage, spread out over 3 nights, and reaching more than 2 millions Malians. His roundtable with community radio operators in Segou also ensured that the local population was better informed about MCC and its impact on Malian agriculture, while the press conference in Mali produced positive articles in seven Malian newspapers, including the most widely-read newspaper, government-owned daily "L'Essor."

¶7. Both the warm reception accorded to Ambassador Danilovich and the assiduous attention being accorded the news of eligibility criteria problems underscore the importance the GOM attaches to the success of its Compact. Further follow-up on scorecard deficiencies follows septel.  
McCulley